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VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . ' James Connolly

THE PENNYWELL PENNY-BOY

ONE OF THE MAJOR local talking points in the past month has been the election of the Mayor of Limerick. The intrigue, abuse and general 'carry-on' among the councillors, during and after the election, has caused many people to ask what the whole thing is all about.

In previous years an agreement had operated whereby the office of Mayor rotated among the three political parties. This year, for a combination of reasons, the agreement fell through and a general free-for-all ensued. The result was a

'DEMOCRACY' IN ACTION

SUPPORTERS OF THE PRESENT system stress how fortunate we all are to be living in a democratic country. We are told that free elections ensure fair play and justice for all people from top to bottom of our society. A minor example of how hollow this claim is was shown, when two members were appointed to the new local health committee. The 'behind-the-scenes' jockeying of the political representatives of capitalism involved made a mockery of the democratic process.

The first background moves began in April when the Limerick Social Service Centre invited all the voluntary organisations in the city to come together. Fifty bodies replied and they formed the Consultative Council of Voluntary Organisations (CCVO). One of the organisations which did not attend was the Variety Club. Under the new set-up the council represents about two thousand volunteers engaged in social and charitable work. Their representatives will eventually comprise a part of the management team of the Social Service Centre. They also nominated two people to fill the vacancies on the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) to the Mid-Western Health Board. These were: Fr. Geoghegan, director, Social Service Centre and Mr. T. McMahon, president, St. Vincent de Paul. The LAC is a committee which is appointed by the Mid-Western Health Board to advise on the operation of health services in their area.

Some time ago, the Limerick City Council made representations to the Minister for Health and asked him if they could be the appointing body. The Minister refused, because there were no provisions in the Health Act for such a move. However, by way of a bonus, he told them they could make recommendations to

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victory for the three local party chiefs R. Liddy (Fianna Fail), Senator T. Russell (Fine Gael) and Steve Coughlan (Labour).

The office of Mayor carries no political weight. The office-holder gains some political kudos through being on the spot when Corporation houses are being given out and when other 'good turns' need to be done. Apart from this, the main function of the Mayor is to act as an ex-officio public relations officer for local business interests. He is expected to lavish praise on the efforts of super-capitalists and gombeen men and to officiate at openings of anything from a hot-dog stand to a housing estate. An astute politician can, however, turn the office to his own account in drumming up personal publicity in the press. This personal publicity angle was essentially what the whole Mayoral election row was all about.

With a general election on the cards anytime in the coming year it was in the interests of the local party chiefs to preserve the political status quo in terms of the present Dail representation. It was vital to prevent any potential Dail candidates like Jack Bourke or Clem Casey (Fianna Fail), Ald Pat Kennedy (Fine Gael) and Mick Lipper (Labour) from becoming Mayor. In the event, Paddy Kiely (Fianna Fail), with the support of the four Labour councillors, became Mayor, beating Ald. Kennedy by twelve votes to four.

Cllr. Joe Quin (Independent), the leader of the Sinn Fein (Gardiner Place) group in

Limerick, failed to put in an appearance at the meeting or to issue a statement explaining his position.

Many people were surprised when the Labour members did not put forward a candidate and, instead, supported the Fianna Fail choice. But to any class-conscious worker this action was totally consistent with the party's past record. The workers of Limerick have never had a genuine working class councillor to represent them. The activities of the Labour Party in Limerick closely follow a similar performance by the Dublin Labour Party toward the end of the last century. On September 16, 1899, James Connolly wrote:

'We have no desire to carp at, or needlessly to criticise, any party sailing under the banner of labour, but we feel we would not be performing our duty to the socialist working class of Ireland did we not point out the fact that the interests of labour were in no way involved in the contest for the mayoral chair. It could hardly be otherwise. It should be remembered that the Labour Party form a fraction of the Municipal Council ... All of them hold the same political and social beliefs as the remainder of the Municipal Council—believe equally with them in the capitalist system, and that rent, profit and interest are the necessary and inevitable pillars of society ... From the entry of the Labour Party into the Municipal Council to the present day their course has been marked by dissension, squabbling and recrimination. No single important move in the interests of the worker was even mooted, the most solemn pledges were incontinently broken, and where the workers looked for inspiration and leadership, they have received nothing but discouragement and disgust ... We see in this contest ... not a fight between capital and labour but a sordid scramble for position between two sets of political wire-pullers, both equally contemptible.'

In another article, 'Labour and Politics in Ireland, April, 1910, Connolly wrote: 'The labour party was a party only in name; it came to signify only certain men who could be trusted to draw working class support to the side of certain capitalist factions.'

At another meeting of the City Council, following the Mayoral election, Ald. Mick Lipper (Labour) stated: 'Because of the skulduggery, conspiracy, bribery and corruption which has taken place in the elections of Mayors in the past I was the first person to moot that our election of

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THE PENNYWELL PENNY-BOY

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Mayor should be carried out in a dignified manner. That was in 1969. I know Mayors who were elected by paying the price for the high office and some of them are still members of this Council.'

Subsequently Cllr. R. Liddy (Fianna Fail) and Senator T. Russell (Fine Gael) disagreed with Lipper's statement. Liddy, however, has a short memory. In 1963, in a dramatic upset, Mrs. F. Condell (Independent) secured the combined Labour and Fine Gael vote and defeated Liddy by ten votes to seven. After the election he complained: 'I was also a candidate because I felt I was getting a certain volume of support which I didn't get, and while I appreciate the fact that people have a perfect right to exercise their vote in any manner, nevertheless, I felt that I was led astray and something went amiss that is not accounted for.' Russell and Coughlan have also taken part in countless Mayor-making deals. Paddy Kiely has achieved his long-cherished dream of becoming Mayor. For long the penny-boy of the local Fianna Fail organisation, it is perhaps only fitting that he should now be rewarded by being promoted to penny-boy of Limerick capitalism for his services to that cause. But his election is also significant on another level. It marks the highest point in the participation of workers in the local Fianna Fail party. The days and influence of Martin Corbett, Tom Dargan, Matty Fahy, Paddy Benson, Mick Fahy, Tom Kennedy and other working class Fianna Fail stalwarts are now over. Paddy Kiely could well be the last worker to reach such high office. Already the trend away from the position can be seen in the composition of the Fianna Fail Council members and in the local leadership. New rich and 'Flash Harry' executive types now predominate.

Meanwhile Kiely lives in his dream come true. He had better make the most of his opportunity for, as the poet Dowson wrote: 'They are not long, the days of wine and roses. Out of a misty dream our path emerges for a while then closes.' The political paths are closing rapidly for the Paddy Kielys of Fianna Fail.

'democracy' in action

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the Mid-Western Health Board. On April 13, seven names went before the Limerick City Council members for their consideration.

Included were the following: Fr. B. Geoghegan, nominee of Council of Voluntary Organisations; Mr. T. McMahon do.; Bro. G. O'Gorman, Brothers of Charity; Mrs. Frances Condell, RETOS, Shannon; Mr. S. Hayes, Variety Club; Mrs. E. Kelly, Simon Community.

There was also two nominees from the Irish Housewives' Association but these withdrew as their body was already a member of the CCVO. Mrs. Kelly was likewise expected to withdraw, as the Simon Community was also in the CCVO. Instead, she canvassed the City Councillors for a recommendation.

To the surprise of the Council of Voluntary Organisations, their nominees did not even receive a recommendation from the City Councillors. It was natural that allegations of canvassing and back-room deals would be made regarding the two people who received recommendations, Mr. S. Hayes and Mrs. E. Kelly.

Hayes, a business colleague of Cllr. Jack Bourke, is, like Bourke, a prominent member of the Variety Club. Most of the members of this small and exclusive club have, apparently, little to do with the variety world and seem to specialise in organising 'charitable' dress dances and receptions, designed to show off their expensively bejewelled and bedecked wives.

But the final act in the democratic drama had yet to be played. This took place on July 7 at the meeting of the Mid-Western Health Board.

For the first vacancy Mr. S. Hayes of the Variety Club was proposed by Cllr. J. Bourke (Fianna Fail). In a nifty piece of political footwork, Sen. Ted Russell (Fine Gael), another wealthy businessman, quickly showed his true interests by clearing party lines in seconding his fellow capitalist. When the vote was taken, Hayes defeated McMahon, the nominee of the

CCVO. However, the second vacancy was won by Fr. Geoghegan over Mrs. Kelly, despite the fact that she had been recommended by Limerick City Council. No questions about the qualifications of the contending candidates were asked. The 'election' was a cut and dried affair. And so Mr. T. McMahon, who represented over two thousand people, was thrown aside for Mr. S. Hayes, who represents ten to fifteen people. And who could doubt that the exercise had not been democracy in action?

The Mid-Western Health Board has for some time been urging the voluntary organisations to get together. It now appears that the Board merely wishes to bring the voluntary organisations into line with its own bureaucratic structure. The affair also shows the hypocrisy of the City Councillors who have on many occasions paid lip service to the wonderful work of voluntary organisations. No protest of any kind has come or is likely to come from the voluntary charitable organisations. They are, after all, part of the same system. However, before the vote took place Sister Caoimhin gently pointed out that the people nominated by the Limerick Social Service Council were representing almost 50 voluntary organisations. Her words fell on deaf, political ears.

It should now be obvious that the new Health Boards will do nothing to change our class-ridden and notorious health services. But, then, who could have expected otherwise? The Government, politicians and Health Boards support the present system of capitalism; all their activities are directed towards this central task. Appointments to Health Boards and committees, national and local, are therefore, controlled tightly by the ruling class. Even a recommendation from a charitable body, like the Consultative Council of Voluntary Organisations, must conform to this law of capitalism as the 'democratic' election at the Mid-Western Health Board meeting effectively demonstrated.

economic demolition

THE 'ECONOMIC DEMOLITION' of Northern industry by the political instruments of the Southern ruling class has been threatening for half a century or more. With the destruction of the Belfast Co-Op and the attempted destruction of Courtauld's factory in Carrickfergus, this work of 'economic demolition' is reaching a climax.

Sinn Fein nationalism arose in the late nineteenth century in response to the needs of the small manufacturers in the South for protection from the competition of the more highly developed large-scale British industry. The separatist economic demands of this nationalism were totally inappropriate for the large-scale industry of the North which required the maintenance of the existing free trade

relations with the British market.

Today in the South industrial development has outgrown the era of protectionism and the separatist ideology associated with protectionism is merely a brake on further development. Sinn Fein (official and provisional) oppose this development from a small manufacturing viewpoint, but today it has become the thing to describe this opposition as 'anti-imperialist' or as 'socialist' opposition to capitalism. But it is nothing of the sort—it is petty bourgeois opposition to large-scale industry.

Sinn Fein is no longer in the mainstream of Catholic Nationalist politics—their separatist dreams took a severe knock in the EEC Referendum in the South—but all Catholic Nationalist politicians, from

Jack Lynch to Sean McStiofan, share the aim of bringing the Ulster Protestant nation under their rule. Thus, although Sinn Fein could not start a campaign of destruction against large-scale industry in the South without being savaged by the ruling class with popular support, in the North where the bourgeoisie, and the majority of the working class, are of another nation this policy could be implemented.

The Official Republicans condemn the bombing campaign in words, but continue churning out the ideology which leads to it. Indeed, as far as the ending of partition is concerned, the bombing campaign makes more sense than the feuding between the Officials and the British Army. The real obstacle to the anti-partitionist objective is large-scale industry and its social effect on the Ulster Protestants (and an increasing number of Catholics). (Reprinted from 'The Two Nations')

tony crowley

freedom unidentified

ALI, 'THE GREATEST', left Ireland after the Croke Park fight, but in the country we still have a fighting joker: A Mr. Jim Smith, supporter of Kevin Boland's pure 'Republican party', Aontacht Eireann.

The story begins with notice of the Mid-Cork election. The story could have been funny, except that it was so sick; but then the sick minds of Aontacht Eireann supporters and the super-duper Republicans see nothing wrong in killing, maiming and destroying the lives of innocent people, both Catholic and Protestant, in Northern Ireland.

The Boland-led party entered the Cork fight presumably to gain a Dail seat, but of course, failing that they will claim a moral victory, which will seem strangely out of context in the present immoral political system.

But to get back to the sick joke: It was Mid-Cork and all the boys were roaring outside the Churches in the hope of arousing some interest among the grass roots. Reporter for the 'Irish Press', Miss Jean Sheridan, found herself talking to a prominent Aontacht Eireann member, Cllr. G. Carroll (Cork), who told her that he did not care if people in the North die, so long as British property is destroyed. The warning bell rang ... and the astute Miss Sheridan realised that she had a good story. So she asked again the all important, 'Can I quote you.'

The story was duly published (July 24) and immediately brought a barrage of protest from Aontacht Eireann supporters. First into the fray was a Jim Smith who asked was it fair to publish the story. And in heavy type too. Amazingly, Smith goes on to say even more than the Cork Aontacht Eireann member.

Bombs and bullets are justified so long as the Protestants join us in building a new Ireland. Wishful thinking on the part of Aontacht Eireann. Here is part of what the 'hard-man' Smith said ('Irish Press' 26/7/72):

'Britain made the mess. Let Britain tell us now what she intends to do. Only then can we renew the work of co-operation to make a Ireland a great country to live in, for all the people.'

On the Northern Protestants he said: 'No Surrender' won't do anymore. With the Queen's army and a fat wallet at her back the parasite of Stormont strutted through the streets of Ireland and half a million Irishmen bit their lips and prayed. They put their dignity in their pockets and drew the dole. Never again.'

Never again ... Never again does the poor man believe it? Apart from the inaccuracy of the 'half a million' drawing the dole, what about the 70,000 who draw the dole in the brave new Republic? Where is their dignity? The attitude and bias expressed by this Aontacht Eireann supporter is classic; his whole hate is directed against Stormont and by this is playing into the hands of the Southern ruling class. Witness, no mention of the unemployed in the South? yet it is not ironic to know that the Northern unemployed receive more benefit money than their Southern counterparts?

Mr. Smith's concern is poor consolation to the Southern worker. Yes this is as it should be, a Southern propaganda directs hate towards Stormont so that the Southern ruling class can continue to successfully exploit the workers. For years this tragedy has misdirected that political awareness of the working class and cynically prevented the emergence and development of a large-scale political consciousness.

The message from Smith's letter is: 'Get the British out and everything will be rosy.' Nothing could be further from the truth. Britain did not 'make the mess'. Nothing is heard about the attempt by the South over the past fifty years, to coerce the North. Rather it was the desire of the Protestant nation, exercising its democratic claim, which led to partition, introduced by Britain to avoid a head-on clash with the Ulster Unionists who had stated that they would not join a Home Rule Ireland.

Near the end of his letter, Smith shows some nice touches of awareness when he

asks what are the bishops doing about freedom.

'Freedom', Smith writes, 'means freedom to shape our lives and develop our talents by responsible action and having the opportunity to do so.'

This freedom has been denied in the Six Counties, reveals Smith. Again no mention of the 26 counties, presumably we all enjoy freedom.

Concluding his hateful outpourings, Smith gives the 'Nation Once Again' bit. He excelled himself with his: 'Aontacht Eireann will unite the people of Ireland in an independent Republic.' And whether they like it or not!

After the Mid-Cork election, Aontacht Eireann will slide silently from the scene, never to resurface. The ruling class for long used Kevin Boland. He was an industrious Minister for Justice and Local Government (remember the Curragh and Hume Street). Now they have no need for him ... tactics have been changed. Fianna Fail and Jack Lynch had a rough transition and all that remains now are a few professional 'Republicans' in the wings of the party. Stormont has been banished; we are set for the EEC; so please don't rock the capitalist boat.

Leddin's Revolution

HAS COUNCILLOR FRANK LEDDIN, Labour Party member of the Limerick City Council, hit on a new and deadly way of storming the bastions of capitalism? With one drastic move Leddin has launched himself on a plan of campaign designed to hit the economic system where it hurts most—in its pocket.

Having tried out a variety of political attitudes—and jobs—in the past, the Catherine Street Councillor has now taken up employment and residence in Dublin. Leddin has followed his three brothers into that traditional industrial home of the Leddin family, the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. His experience in political wire-pulling was evidently a useful recommendation in securing for him his present post of telephonist.

That Leddin did not spend his idle moments at the switchboard in day-dreams is obvious from his latest action. His mind focused on the travelling and subsistence allowances for members of local authorities. He investigated and unearthed an extract from Circular GI3/68, dated September 4, 1968. It stated: 'In the case of any member of a local authority whose official residence is five miles or more by any route from the place of the meeting of the local authority travelling expenses may be paid on the following basis, either—(a) the actual expenses which would reasonably have been incurred by the member in travelling from and to his official residence to and from the place of the meeting, or (b) if the local authority, by resolution, so decide, a rate not exceeding 1s. 6d. in respect of each mile travelled from and to his official residence to and from the place of meeting.'

The green light was beckoning. Leddin had hit the jackpot. The rest was easy. At a meeting of the Limerick City Council,

held on Monday, 24 July, the resolution (b) regarding Leddin's travelling expenses was duly moved by Councillor Gus O'Driscoll (Fine Gael). The rest of the Council members of the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour parties obligingly supported the resolution.

It has been estimated that Leddin's round trip to and from future Council meetings will involve a journey of over 240 miles and expenses of more than £18. The economic strain of this extra expenditure on local ratepayers and business people will be severe. No prize, however, for guessing the councillor who can be expected to have the best attendance record at future Limerick City Council meetings.



CLOSED SHOP

THE RECENT DISAGREEMENT between the Limerick branches of the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union and the Amalgamated Electrical Union regarding the 'closed shop' being operated by the NEETU at the Ferenka and other local factories, has caused concern among engineering workers and other Limerick trade unionists.

The 'Limerick Socialist' is investigating this problem and a special article on 'closed shops' considered from a socialist position, will be published in the September edition of this paper.

IN AN EDITORIAL comment on the recent survey which showed a drop of 45% in the recruitment of priests, brothers and nuns and a general decline in the social status of the clergy, Fr. Liam Ryan wrote:

'... The real question is not why vocations are in decline, but why were they ever so high. Why did the number of vocations increase so dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century? ... The phenomenal rise in vocations in Ireland in the period 1920-1960 is, of course, not due to any one cause. It is due to a convergence of many factors. The sheer idealism which once inspired young men to go and convert China no longer has the same vitality. Indeed, here too the wheel may be already in the process of doing a full turn.'

In the period of economic protectionism and narrow nationalism (1920-1960) what really brought about the high vocation rate, and what reasons inspired to many young Irishmen 'to go and convert China'? How were these vocations created and fostered? An examination of the contents of the magazine 'The Far East', official organ of the Maynooth Mission to China, St. Columban's, Navan, during this period, gives a clue to these questions.

An editorial on the need for priests in 'The Far East' of January, 1933, states: '... There is no doubt about it; the need of priests in pagan lands is the greatest need of the Church today. Where are the priests to come from? Not from the pagan lands themselves; the number of Christians there is so small that they can produce only a very small number of priests. In the course of time the number will be growing and, in God's good time we hope to see China and other pagan lands completely manned by native priests. But that time is not yet and therefore unless priests go to China from Catholic lands like our own the Gospel will not be preached in China. What would be our fate now if St. Patrick had not come to us? The Catholic families of Catholic countries like Ireland ought to come forward for the conversion of the pagans. Our Catholic boys can propose to themselves no higher vocation than that of becoming missionary priests in pagan lands ... There can be little doubt that every boy who goes as a priest to China will save souls which, only for them would have been eternally lost.'

The editorial writer then states a vocation, far from being an inner or 'other worldly' call, can be explained simply in human terms and is nothing more than a bishop inviting a young man to become a priest. The editorial continues: 'But many boys will be uneasy and frightened at the thought of the priesthood lest they may not have a vocation. This uneasiness is sometimes encouraged by people who do not wish the boys to become missionary priests. Many people think that vocation is some kind of a mysterious interior voice in the soul of a boy calling him to the priesthood. This is not so. Pope Pius X teaches that it is not so. Vocation to the priesthood is a very simple thing. It is a call given by the bishop inviting a young man to receive ordination. How, then, is a boy to know whether he may become a priest? It is not

part two

a sign of the

at all difficult. All that is needed is good health, average ability, good character and that piety which enables the boy to hope that, with God's help, he will, during his college course, acquire the virtue necessary for the priesthood; and, finally, a good intention: that is to say that he desires the priesthood for God's glory and the salvation of souls. The great majority of boys in our Irish schools and colleges are quite fit to become priests if they so desire it. Do you really desire to serve God in the priesthood? If so there is an extremely good chance that you can become a good priest.'

The editorial writer stressed the right of even a fifteen year old boy to overrule his parents on this matter and of the serious sin committed by parents by interfering with this 'right'. There was no doubt about the matter of vocations as far as the Mission to China was concerned: the child was indisputably the father of the man. The article went on: 'Here is a fact which perhaps is not very well known: every boy has a right from the very law of nature itself to select the state of life in which he will serve God and save his own soul. No one has any right to command boys to select one state rather than another; and boys are

not bound to obey such commands if they are given. Moreover, the Church gives a boy the right to select to join a Missionary Society like the Maynooth Mission to China after he reaches his fifteenth year. After that age no one has any right to say that the boy is too young to make the decision.

'Boys have some difficulties to encounter when they prepare to devote their lives to God in a Missionary Society. Probably the very greatest difficulty they experience is the opposition of parents, relatives and others who try to turn them away from their resolution. Many good boys have been prevented from becoming missionary priests by such interference and it is right that boys should know what their rights are in such a matter. There is only one case in which a boy is bound to obey his parents if they forbid him to enter a Missionary Society; and it is if the parents are in grave necessity and if the boy can relieve them by not joining the Society. They are not bound to obey in any other case and parents and others may commit a sin—possibly even a mortal sin—if they try to prevent the boy from doing what he desires.'

The editorial emphasises that a boy's suitability for the priesthood cannot be

connolly's socialism

'BUT ON WHOM devolves the task of achieving that downfall of the ruling classes in Ireland? On the Irish people. But who are the Irish people? Is it the dividend-hunting capitalist with the phraseology of patriotism on his lips and the spoil wrung from sweated Irish toilers in his pockets; is it the scheming lawyer—most immoral of all classes; is it the slum landlord who denounces rackrenting in the country and practices it in the towns; is it any one of these sections who today dominate Irish politics? Or is it not rather the Irish working class—the only secure foundation on which a free nation can be reared—the Irish working class which has borne the brunt of every political struggle, and gained by none, and which is today the only class in Ireland, which has no interest to serve in perpetuating either the political or social forms of oppression ...?' ('Erin's Hope—The End and the Means').



'THE FREEDOM of the working class must be the work of the working class.' ('Erin's Hope—The End and the Means').

IMAGES OF

HAVING AN EXCESSIVE 'literary' education, the Limerick I left in the late '50s was summed up for me—and for many of my contemporary bruised generation—in Frank O'Connor's phrase as 'the place where people wait for Life Everlasting.' Not being willing to wait a lifetime in the one place for that doubtful bounty, we decided to up and go—pitching for the penny of to-day rather than the possible shilling at the end of the Confraternity Rainbow.

So I carried my tag of 'Limerickman' around for a decade like a convict dragging his ball and chain. In Dublin in the early 'sixties, being a Limerickman was alright ... providing one was in Sinn Fein or GAA company ('Ah, a great hurler Mick Mackey: 'Ah, a great patriot, Sean South.') Not much good to me though—for I couldn't shoot either bullet or sliotar.

After that it was London, and even there in certain theatrical circles, coming from Limerick had its kudos. It was the heyday of Richard Harris, then a legend in Kensington; big, brawny Dickie who slept on floors and married a Lord's daughter and who, whatever he may have learned later, had his first real acting lessons imitating Brando in the Savoy. But I wasn't six foot and there seemed a shortage of Earls' daughters.

It was also nice to be a Limerickman when Donogh O'Malley was doing his bit

times

"There is no money priesting. There may have been at one time but there certainly isn't now ... It is a life with its own kind of stress and strains ... The glamour too has largely gone out of it. Time was when the priesthood was a prestige calling, when people looked up to the priest and deferred to him. These last few years, though, priests and bishops have taken such a battering on the communications media in particular, whatever they do they can't win ..."

(Dr. Cornelius Lucey, Bishop of Cork).

judged by his parents; the exclusive arbiter could only be the Superiors of the Missionary Society. Any attempt by the parents to test the boy's vocation is strongly discouraged. The editorial goes on: 'Other difficulties also present themselves. Boys are told that they are too young: the answer to this is that the Church gives a boy the right to decide after his fifteenth birthday. Boys are also told that they are not suitable for the life of a Missionary priest. The judge of this is, not the parents, but the Superiors of the Missionary Society who

LIMERICK by kevin o'connor

among the young Turks of the Lemass Cabinet and stealing money for schools from an 'unsuspecting' Finance Minister, Jack Lynch.

It wasn't so 'nice' however, to be a Limerickman a few years later when Steve Coughlan's hysteria was splashed in the British 'Jewish Chronicle' (hardly destined to promote foreign industrial investment in Limerick) or during the Maoist episode, when one felt that if Christ ever wanted to be re-crucified, He'd most likely choose Limerick for the exercise—appearing in robes and red book and promising the truth would be sufficient to bring on the hammer and nails. Though a charge of buckshot might be more characteristic of the merchant city.

At least that was the image of Limerick in the growing left-wing consciousness of the mid-sixties. I remember once on a journalistic assignment to interview Dominic Behan in London, when he suddenly asked me where I came from and when I replied 'Limerick', he was off to the other end of the bar leaving unprintable exclamations attached to the names of Coughlan, Mayor Daley and George Wallace.

Only my mutterings about the Soviet of 1919 induced him to resume relations. This paper shows that the consciousness expressed then, survives to-day.

are very careful in selecting those who are admitted. If they accept a boy the parents have no right to say that he is not fit for the life he has chosen.

'Another very favourite device which is used to prevent boys from becoming Missionary priests is to 'test their vocation' as they say. This is a very subtle and a very dangerous device. It is little better than a ruse to turn the boy away altogether from the Missionary priesthood and it succeeds as a general rule. What happens is that the boy, after he has finished his Intermediate course, enters another state of life, and, later on, it will be too late to enter a Missionary Society. Many boys have been successfully deprived of their life's ambition by this means.'

Fr. Liam Ryan, in his analysis, does not attempt to assess the contribution of this type of propaganda to 'the phenomenal rise in vocations in Ireland in the period 1920-1960' and the carefully prepared manner in which it was directed at idealistic and impressionable young minds. He does, however, touch on the economic changes in this period. He states: '... In the 1930s and 1940s, Ireland as a nation became a closed introspective society out of the mainstream of modern life and modern politics ... In Ireland, this process lasted right down to the late 1950s. By then the crisis had been reached. Emigration was more than 50,000 per annum, a level almost as high as the annual number of births, and considerably more than half of those reaching maturity were leaving the 'stricken' land. In parts of the country, the sense of doom and decay were overwhelming. Since the process we have been describing is an anti-life process—a flight from present life—the only effective force to counter it is a redefinition of what life means. Defining life in new terms was what nationalism tried to do at the end of the nineteenth century. It was what 'Whitakerism' or 'Lemassism' did in the late 1950s. Life was now redefined in such a manner that hope, opportunity, promise, success, and all that made life meaningful were seen in purely economic terms. And once this is accepted and enough people subscribe to it, you get a stabilisation and an overcoming of alienation, and that is what we are getting in Ireland at the present time. But because it is, in the last analysis, a pseudo-definition of life it too will begin to create its own forms of alienation. The old symptoms of alienation are disappearing—late marriages, emigration, banning of literature of the contemporary world, etc.—but new ideas are appearing. And they are appearing precisely where the new philosophy of life has been most successful—in the cities. This is a sort of second state alienation and it finds an outlet in drugs, in strikes and protests, in cries against bureaucracy and demands for involvement and participation. And students and intellectuals and others are beginning to say that something has gone wrong and society must be changed.'

Thus Fr. Ryan describes how the Southern Irish ruling class abandoned economic protectionism in the late

1950s and opted for free trade and later Common Market membership in bringing the country into line with the requirements of modern monopoly capitalism. He also shows how the transition from a predominantly rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrialised society has affected the priesthood and religion generally: 'The re-definition of life in purely economic terms is not entirely wrong. In many ways, it offers the first real hopes of a solution to Ireland's problems for fifty, perhaps even for one hundred and fifty years. However, it does emphasise the materialistic aspect of life, and so religion and religious needs are seen as just a little less important. Since the new philosophy of life has been adopted mainly by the middle classes, and since this same group has traditionally been the main source for vocations, the impact on potential candidates for the religious life is bound to be considerable. There has been a considerable drop in the number of vocations from diocesan colleges and from the schools of religious orders.'

An interesting sequel to this picture of dwindling vocations is provided by the new advertising methods being used in the attempt to recruit more priests. In April and May of this year, the Sacred Heart Missionaries in Cork commissioned a leading advertising agency, to launch an advertising campaign in national and provincial newspapers as well as in the pop magazine, 'Spotlight', to try to induce more vocations. The campaign was described as having a 'brash, hard-sell flavour' and as being 'a radical departure from the conservative advertising ideas of Irish religious life.' The advertisements, accompanied by picture of a 'mod', long-haired, young priest, a drug addict and 'with-it' young men in a pub, promised: 'Travel, adventure, responsibility, a chance to use initiative. ... You could be clearing a jungle, driving a tractor, growing crops, before building a school or teaching. And—in your spare time—coaching a budding Pele or Eusebio.'

The 'marketing' approach of Cork Sacred Heart Missionaries has obviously been influenced by the advertising campaign being run by the trendy Trinitarians in America. The order caused some raised eyebrows last January, by placing a full page recruiting advertisement in 'Playboy', cheek-by-jowl with pictures of the magazine's sanguine nudes. However, few Irishmen are likely to be influenced by this advertisement, as the magazine is still banned here. But whether these 'hard-sell' efforts to arrest the sharp decline in vocations will succeed, is a doubtful proposition. This decline cannot be divorced from the economic situation. Karl Marx wrote: 'In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it form the basis upon which is built up and which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch.' The decline in vocations can only be seen as a sign of the times.

(concluded)

D 08910

How Aontacht Eireann came to London

THE LEAFLET ANNOUNCED: 'Aontacht Eireann, public meeting, at the Irish Centre, Murray Street, Camden Town, London, NW1, 8.30 p.m., Tuesday, 20th June, 1972. All Irish people are invited to attend. Speakers include: Mr. Kevin Boland, Chairman Aontacht Eireann, Captain James Kelly, Vice-Chairman, Aontacht Eireann.' News of the decision of the speakers to bring the latest brand of republicanism to Camden Town left the London-Irish population unexcited. It was appropriate, however, that this gathering of traditional, true-blue republicans should have started and ended, in the traditional way—at the bar.

The evening began with Kevin Boland and his Man Friday, Captain James Kelly, exchanging pleasantries and drinks at the Irish Centre bar, with the chairman and secretary of the London branch, and the guest chairman, Labour Councillor Healy (Essex), who presided at the meeting. About 100 people attended, and at 8.45 pm they were ushered into the large 'sing-song' room. The choice of the room was also appropriate, as it marked the debut and swan song of Boland and his party in London.

The chairman, Healy, who republicanism, like his Kerry accent, has been somewhat diluted by 22 years out of Ireland, has a British Army war record to his credit and is now a farmer. He saw his republican role, he said, as an educator of the British public, rather than going to help in the fight in Northern Ireland, a place he later admitted to which he had never been. Captain Kelly stated that he had been to Derry recently to discover, much to his joy, that all shades of opinion were in favour of 'peace with justice', and he asserted that people in Belfast and the rest of the Irish people throughout the world felt the same way. Kelly did not, of course, define what the magic formula of 'peace with justice' meant for the Northern Protestant community.

Kevin Boland had nothing new to say. His well-worn anti-Jack Lynch, anti-Fianna Fail diatribe, long familiar to the Southern Irish people, still sounds as hypocritical as ever. For all Boland's talk about republicanism, he never gets around to explaining how, as Minister for Local Government in the Fianna Fail administration, he openly collaborated with British imperialism in the exploitation of the ordinary people in land, housing and property speculation. Nor did we hear much about his period as Minister for Defence, which began in 1957, when his most notable achievement was to imprison his fellow-republicans now interned in the Curragh camp. Boland's crocodile tears for the plight of republicans now interned in Northern Ireland show the dishonesty and bankruptcy of his position.

As he continued speaking, most of the hundred people present began to talk among themselves or to slip away for drinks at the bar, which by now had opened up at the

back of the room. It was on this discordant note that the meeting, one-and-three-quarters hours after it started, petered out. The only successful feature of the evening was the bar, and the people present, many of them from other republican organisations in London, obviously preferred the taproom republicanism being smoothly distilled behind the counter.

Was the journey really necessary? The visit of Boland and Kelly to London has

LIVING IN HOPE

At the first public meeting in London of Aontacht Eireann, hopes were expressed that a commitment from Britain to the idea of a 31-county Ireland would emerge from the planned peace talks.

The meeting called for an extension of Radio Eireann's reception limits so that listeners in England could pick up the programmes. They also called for a provision of programmes to cater for Irish people living in England.

('Irish Press', 30/6/'72.)

helped to swell the annual British tourist influx. In terms of the realities of Irish politics, it was an irrelevant and useless exercise.

SILLY SEASON

THE TERM 'SILLY SEASON' has long existed the capitalist press. It means that during periods (usually the summer or holiday time) when nothing serious happens, newspaper reporters are forced to fill the spaces between the advertisements with 'stories' and editorials about men biting dogs, etc. In Limerick, it is often difficult enough to determine when precisely a silly season begins and ends.

This year however, it can be said to have started with a 'Limerick Leader' editorial, of July 22, titled: 'The People Who Don't Live On The Hill'. The article stated: 'Shannon is much more than just an airport. It is also, of course, an industrial estate. Above all else, however, it is a community.'

'Shannon Free Airport Development Company officials quite rightly project the new town as an attractive place in which to live.'

'But how many of the men involved in selling Shannon actually live there themselves?'

The editorial then goes on to list the ten top executives, their positions and their addresses, in the development company, ranging from Brendan O'Regan and Paul Quigley to Ray Joyce and Tom Dunne. And, wonder of wonders, it turns out that not one of the ten lives among the workers at Shannon. The 'Leader', however, does not attack or criticise them for the choice of their place of residence but meekly concludes with the question: 'How long before Shannon Free Airport generals join the people who live on the hill?'

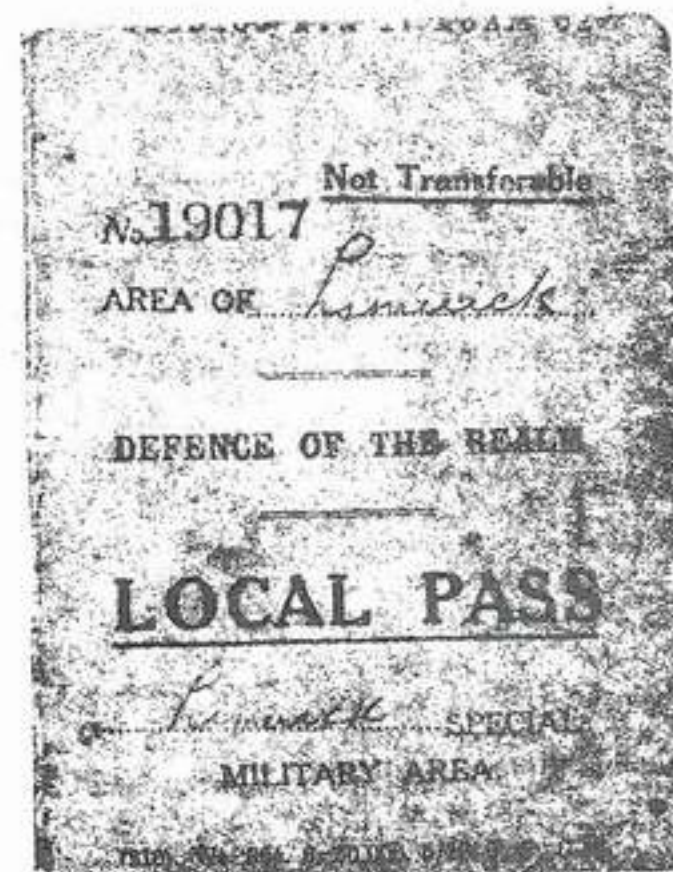
The Shannon Free Development Company has long been an enclave of Fianna Fail hacks. The 'Leader' editorial did not, of course, say this, nor does it make any attempt to list the political affiliations and influence of the ten top 'generals' with their positions and their addresses. The 'generals' are nothing more than highly paid touts whose positions depend on attracting foreign industrialists and tourists to the Shannon region. The 'Leader' editorial conveniently omitted the salaries and flexible expense accounts of the ten top Shannon lap-dogs of international capitalism.

But in looking up at Tullyglass Hill the

'Leader's' short-sightedness becomes clear. There is an even more remarkable home and work situation sitting in its own boardroom. Is the fact that the directors of the 'Leader' live in Ballybunion, Dublin and deepest Devon—in fact everywhere but Limerick—worth an editorial or two?

But the editorial's main point about bosses and managers living at their place of work has interesting and novel possibilities. If the idea catches on, can we expect to see the City Manager living at the Town Hall, Senator Ted Russell residing overhead his bakery and millionairess, Barbara Hutton, occupying a flat over her Woolworth's store? With this kind of 'Leader' logic there is obviously no danger of the silly season running out of Limerick copy.

worker's permit



LIMERICK SOVIET

THE LIMERICK

SOVIET part five JIM KEMMY

While the strike was in progress the annual congress of the Gaelic Athletic Association was held in Dublin, on April 20. A delegate from Limerick attending the congress said that ... 'his appearance there was in connection with the strike aid committee. The members of the committee desired to get funds to relieve such distress as has been caused to the Limerick workers. The fight in Limerick was independent of class or religion. It was for the right of the workers to do their work in their own way and in their own time. He might say ... that so far the workers were as well fed as they had been at any time in their careers ...

'He asked those who were present to put the case of the workers before their friends in the country who might have a little cash to spare ...' ('Irish Times' report.)

Support was promised to the Limerick workers from Cork, Dublin and other counties, and a resolution was later adopted making a grant of £100 from the GAA to the strike fund, and requesting the counties to contribute to the same fund. A collection of £36 15s. for the workers was also taken up at the congress.

On April 22 the 'Irish Times' carried a report on the attitude of the British trade unions to the Limerick strike. 'It is stated from London that British trade unionists have considered the situation in Limerick and are opposed to trade union machinery for political ends. They regard the trouble in Limerick as mainly political.'

The following day the same paper stated: 'Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., in a circular to the branches of the railwaymen's union in Ireland ... advises the members of the union not to take any official part in the movement without the authority of the executive committee. In accordance with the instructions given, a copy of Mr. Thomas's letter has been sent to the branch of the union at Limerick and to all the branches connected with the railwaymen throughout Ireland.'

A report, giving the local reaction to the news stated: 'The statement attributed to Mr. Stockman, on behalf of the Executive of the English Trades Unions, alleging that the strike has political aims is greatly resented by the Labour leaders locally, who emphatically deny that it is in any way connected with politics. Many of them are quite convinced that it is a Labour and not a political question but there is no doubt that it is a politico-industrial matter.'

The correspondent went on to speculate on the course of the strike: 'The failure of the National Executive of the Labour Party to fulfill their engagement to meet here today is regarded as an indication that all is not well in Labour circles. Their absence, taken in conjunction with the action of the British Labour Party leaders, forces one to the conclusion that the end of the strike cannot be very far off. The decision to issue 'Treasury Notes' to secure goods on credit is taken as a sign of growing financial weakness ... Then the

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. This Pass is Granted to:		Issued by <i>D. Watson</i>
Name or Title (Mr., Mrs., or Miss)	MR	Rank <i>Captain</i>
SURNAME (in Capitals)	DANAHER	Station <i>Limerick</i>
Christian Name	MICHAEL	Date <i>April 16 1918</i>
Age	44	Occupation <i>Laborer</i>
Postal Address	4 Griffiths Rd. Catherine St. Limerick	
Signature of Holder	<i>M. Danaher</i>	
Date of Arrival in Area	<i>Resident</i>	
OFFICIAL STAMP	PHOTOGRAPH or DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS
	Height 5 ft. 6 ins. Build <i>medium</i> Hair, Colour <i>Fair</i> Eyes, Colour <i>Blue</i>	This Pass must be produced for inspection at any time. It is required to go to by any Naval or Military Officer, Sailor or Soldier on duty, or Police Officer, or Constable, or any other authorized Person. This Pass can only be used by a British Subject ordinarily resident in <i>Limerick</i> . This Pass may at any time be revoked.

theatrical protest effectively staged at Sarsfield Bridge last night, seems to have been decided upon as a last resort ... The impression therefore is gaining ground that the crisis has passed and that the close of the week will synchronise with the close of the strike. No one will be sorry when the end does come, as everyone is getting weary of the deadlock ...'

In the same edition (April 23), the 'Irish Times' editorial writer continued his critical analysis of the strike: 'The strikers declare that their action has no connection with politics, but is merely Labour's challenge to assaults on its dignity and convenience. The Labour leaders in England refuse to accept that theory, and Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., has warned the branches of the railwaymen's union in Ireland against any unauthorised support of 'what appears to be an industrial move against political action.' It is indeed, quite clear that while the strike may have begun as a purely local affair, it is now being used as a deliberate and very ambitious attack on the whole system of government. The central executive of the Irish Labour Movement has identified itself with the agitation, which can be dissociated no longer from the propaganda of the Irish republicans. An effort is being made to extend the strike to the rest of Ireland—in other words to present the government with the fait accompli of a whole nation brought to a social and economic standstill. We are spectators today at a very bold and candid experiment in Irish syndicalism.

'We think that the experiment will fail. The National Executive of Labour evidently is disappointed with the result of its appeal to the workers throughout Ireland. Its project of 'Promissary Notes' is a sign of financial weakness. A universal strike cannot succeed without almost unlimited funds. The great English Unions, which have some first-hand acquaintance with Bolshevism, clearly do not intend, by financing it in Ireland, to weaken their own authority at home. Finally the strike cannot be universal because the sturdy and highly organised Labour of North East Ulster will have nothing to say to it. The truth is that Syndicalism and Bolshevism, with their common motto, 'what is yours is

mine, and what is mine is my own,' never will make any real headway in this country ...'

'The Limerick strike and the National Executive's hopes are possible just now because political excitement runs high, because extremist organisations terrorise public opinion and because the Irish people, in their insular isolation have not learned, like the English, the lesson of recent events in Russia and Germany. We hope that they will be sobered and instructed by the story of the strike at Limerick, and we are not sorry that General Griffin decided to give the local soviet a free hand. The country will note that this body assumes the right to kill industry, to regulate trade, to put its own prices on commodities, to inflict more arbitrary restrictions on individual liberties than were ever attempted by Prussian bureaucracy in its mightiest hour. It will note also the sort of friends whom the Limerick Soviet has made in England. The great organisation of Labour remain silent and aloof. Only the extreme socialists, a small and discredited body, take it to their bosom. It has earned the injurious praise of the British Socialist Party and of the Independent Labour Party ...

'The agitation is a challenge to British Government in Ireland. Today, however, these men are acting with the tacit consent—though not, are are convinced, with the genuine approval—of a majority of Irish Nationalists. The Nationalist press does not criticize them. No Nationalist organisation has warned the country against their schemes ...'

The 'injurious praise ... of the Independent Labour Party' was also given in the same edition in an account of that party's annual conference: 'Councillor Crawford, Edinburgh, said that they ought to do something to encourage the 'Limerick Soviet' which had got over its financial difficulties by the issue of a paper currency of its own. He would like to see the working classes in this country do the same. In spite of what Mr. MacDonald had said, the 'Limerick Soviet' was the first working class Soviet on practical lines established in these islands. Although it was not possible to move a resolution, their sympathies were with their Irish friends.' (to be continued)

D 08910

COUNCIL COMMENTARY

LIMERICK'S MAYORAL ELECTION was one of the most controversial held in recent years. Crowds gathered outside the Council Chamber, where late-comers were told: 'It will be better than Croke Park.'

Gardai tried to control the crowd but were greeted with slogans like: 'It's years since Fossett's Circus came to town.' A sit-down protest was then staged and the demonstrators began to chant: 'We want action.'

They had not long to wait as the procession of red-coated and red-faced councillors climbed the human barricade to gain entry to the Chamber. Cllr. Jack Bourke was heard to remark: 'It reminds me of my one-day excursion to Derry.' The crowded Chamber, gaily bedecked with flowers flogged from the People's Park, waited for the grand entrance of Cllr. Vincent Feeney, whose trip 'from Barrington's Hospital and back' act deserved the Sean na Scuab award.

Hearing the commotion, the crowded gallery looked around just in time to see one of the Ambulance men buckle at the knees and nearly let the unfortunate Feeney slide off the stretcher. But quick as a flash the agile baker was back aboard and was overheard swearing: 'For God's sake don't do that again ... I need the publicity.'

After the two people had stopped clapping, outgoing Mayor, Cllr. Gus O'Driscoll, recalled the highlights of his office term. 'I can say, without fear of contradiction, that I fooled ye all and furthered the cause of my lounge bar,'

he said.

The assembled councillors looked shocked but the worst was yet to come. The Pity Manager could not control himself, and before the Mace Bearer could bonk him over the head with his club, he roared: 'Look at them ... and their holy faces ... all dressed in red robes trying to grab a bit of dignity,' he said amid thunderous applause from the public gallery.

Quickly the meeting moved on while Cllr. O'Driscoll said in a shocked tone: 'How could you Tom.' From his death-bed, Cllr. Feeney, who had his hand ready to grab the microphone, proposed that Paddy Kiely be made Mayor. 'Paddy is a hard worker. He toils in his sweet shop, serving the people from dawn to dusk. He may not say much but he certainly gets away with it and what is more he is a hard-liner of the tinkers,' said Feeney with tears of admiration streaming down his face. Winding up the wonderous works of Kiely, Cllr. Feeney begged the people of Limerick to witness Paddy at work in his shop. 'And he has the best jelly-babies in town,' he said as one person clapped who was later discovered to be the representative of a toffee company.

After this a big fight broke out with Mick Lipper, the Garryowen striker, claiming everybody in the Chamber. 'I don't want to be Mayor at all ... that's only a Mickey Mouse job,' he said as he gave Ald Pat Kennedy a dig in the head.

The two members of Junior Chamber in the public gallery, among the peasants, told waiting pressmen that they would prepare a report on 'Violence in Public Life', which would shock the public into the realisation that they were being represented by engine drivers, bookies and dockers. 'Ugh!' said one as he fainted.

Within minutes the whole monkey business was over. Fianna Fail had four new 'Labour' supporters and Cllr. Paddy Kiely was Mayor. He sniffled as he rubbed his nose on the sleeve of the red robe. He read his speech, titled 'By This I Stand', doggedly and traced his political development and the influences which moulded him on his way to power:

'My name is Paddy Kiely and I come from Pennywell although I was born in the 'Parish' but I moved out to better myself. I'm not much good at speaking, but Rory Liddy got this speech written out for me today, so in the interests of the ould Party I must go through with it.

'I am twenty-one years a member of Fianna Fail ... I joined just after leaving school when I was sixteen. Me people were in the party before me. I have faithfully served Fianna Fail down through the years, so much so that I now have no other interests except politics. I eats, drinks and sleeps politics.

'I got a job from ould Dessie O'Malley as a clerk and I learned a lot about politics there. I also learned a good few tricks from the late Mick Hartney. I got on alright 'til young Dessie took over the office. By this time I had got married and I looked for a few bob rise. Instead, I was told that if I didn't like the conditions I could get out. I left and bought an insurance round and opened a little sweet shop.

'I was co-opted onto the Council in

1962 when Tommy Creamer died. I have fought many battles inside and outside the Party. Dunnick tried to 'do' me in the last local elections but even he failed. He put Jack Sheehan on one side of me and Mrs. O'Regan on the other and tried to squeeze me out. But I got there in spite of him. Coughlan tried to insult me publicly a few times. He once called me 'a parcel of imbecility' and also referred to me as 'Mr. Attorney General.' Casey also told me to my face, when I last tried to go forward for Mayor, that 'I wasn't fit to wear the mayoral chain.' But I still got there before him.

'I know Eamonn de Valera personally and Jack Lynch also. I knew Sean Lemass before he died. I have been director of elections and a member of the National Executive of Fianna Fail. The letters I got from de Valera, Lemass and Lynch for winning the elections in East Limerick can still be seen.

'I have few ambitions left. I know I promised to get a new Town Hall and the extra bridge over the Shannon, but that was only for the benefit of the press boys. My present ambition is to get through the year as Mayor without too much trouble. I have already ordered a new grey suit to help me to look the part. I have also asked Babs Shanahan, the Corporation script-writer, to write my speeches in short, simple words. Long words and long speeches only confuse people.

'I know that a lot of knackers, chancers and taca-men have come into the Fianna Fail Party in recent years, but we are still the same old party. These wealthy elements may seem to be in control of the party now but we will win it back. We will also win back the Six Counties and the Irish language. This is what Fianna Fail politics is all about. What is good for Fianna Fail must be good for the Irish people. This should go without saying.

'Anyway, who cares too much about any other type of politics. It is our country and I intend to do my part in seeing that Fianna Fail holds on to its power. I adjourn this meeting and we'll celebrate our victory in Geary's Hotel. 'Kiely as Mayor'. That's one for the book.'

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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